

What is claimed is:

1. A computing device, comprising:
 - an illuminable housing having a housing wall configured to allow the passage of light; and
 - a light emitting device disposed inside the illuminable housing, the light emitting device being configured to produce a light effect that alters the ornamental appearance of the computing device.
- 10 2. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the housing wall has a contour that helps to define the outer peripheral form of the illuminable housing.
- 15 3. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the light emitting device includes a light source configured to generate the light so as to illuminate the interior of the illuminable housing.
4. The computing device as recited in claim 3 wherein the light source includes at least one light emitting diode.
- 20 5. The computing device as recited in claim 3 wherein the light source includes a plurality of light emitting diodes.
6. The computing device as recited in claim 5 wherein each of the light emitting diodes generate the same color of light.
- 25 7. The computing device as recited in claim 5 wherein each of the light emitting diodes generate individually different colors of light.
8. The computing device as recited in claim 7 wherein the light emitting diodes 30 cooperate to produce a light effect having a single color.
9. The computing device as recited in claim 7 wherein the light emitting diodes cooperate to produce a light effect having a plurality of colors.

10. The computing device as recited in claim 5 wherein the plurality of light emitting diodes are integrated into a light emitting diode array.

11. The computing device as recited in claim 10 wherein the light emitting diode array includes a blue, red and green light emitting diode.

12. The computing device as recited in claim 3 wherein the light illuminates an inner surface of the housing wall to effect an appearance change in an outer surface of the housing wall.

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13. The computing device as recited in claim 3 wherein the light illuminates an inner edge of the housing wall to effect an appearance change in an outer edge of the housing wall.

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14. The computing device as recited in claim 3 further including a shaped wall disposed between the light source and the housing wall, and wherein the light from the light source illuminates an inner surface of the shaped wall to produce a shaped light effect at an outer surface of the shaped wall.

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15. The computing device as recited in claim 3 further including a light pipe for distributing the light to locations within the illuminable housing.

16. The computing device as recited in claim 3 further including a light guide for focussing the light generated by the light source.

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17. The computing device as recited in claim 3 further including a lens for focussing the light generated by the light source.

18. The computing device as recited in claim 3 further including a reflector for 30 redirecting the light to locations within the illuminable housing.

19. The computing device as recited in claim 3 wherein the light emitting device further comprises a light source controller in communication with the light source,

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said light source controller being configured to process light commands to produce the light in a controlled manner via the light source.

20. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the housing wall is 5 capable of producing a characteristic glow at the outer periphery of the housing wall when the light is transmitted through the housing wall.

21. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the housing is configured to enclose internal components associated with the operation of the computing device.

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22. The computer system as recited in claim 21 wherein the illuminable housing is configured to cover and protect the internal components.

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23. The computing device as recited in claim 21 wherein the internal components comprise a processor.

24. The computing device as recited in claim 21 wherein the internal components comprise a display controller, input controller or output controller.

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25. The computing device as recited in claim 21 wherein the internal components comprise a display that is distinctly separate from the light emitting device.

26. The computing device as recited in claim 21 wherein the internal components comprise an input or output device.

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27. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the light effect is static.

28. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the light effect is dynamic.

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29. The computing device as recited in claim 1 wherein the computing device is a general purpose computer.

30. The computing device as recited in claim 29 wherein the general purpose computer is a desktop computer.

31. The computing device as recited in claim 29 wherein the general purpose computer is a laptop computer.

32. A computer system having a housing for enclosing at least one component of the computer system, the housing having a light passing wall, the computer system comprising:

10 a light source disposed inside the housing, the light source being configured to generate light; and

15 a light controller operatively coupled to the light source, the light source controller being configured to control the light source so as to illuminate at least a portion of the light passing wall of the housing with the light generated by the light source.

33. The computer system as recited in claim 32 wherein the light source is dedicated to illuminating the light passing wall.

20 34. The computer system as recited in claim 32 wherein the light source is not a display.

35. The computer system as recited in claim 32 wherein the light source controller is disposed inside the housing.

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36. The computer system as recited in claim 32 further comprising a processor configured to carry out operations associated with the computer system, the processor being operatively coupled to the light source controller.

30 37. The computer system as recited in claim 36 wherein the processor is disposed inside the housing.

38. The computer system as recited in claim 32 further comprising:
a display; and

a display controller configured to process display commands to produce text or graphics on the display.

39. The computer system as recited in claim 38 wherein the display is disposed
5 inside the housing.

40. The computer system as recited in claim 38 wherein the display controller is disposed inside the housing.

10 41. The computer system as recited in claim 32 further comprising:
an input/output controller configured to control interactions with one or more
input/output devices that can be operatively coupled to the computer system.

15 42. The computer system as recited in claim 41 wherein the input/output controller is disposed inside the housing.

20 43. The computer system as recited in claim 32 further comprising:
a processor configured to carry out operations associated with the computer system, the processor being operatively coupled to the light source controller;
a display;
a display controller operatively coupled to the processor and the display, the display controller being configured to process display commands to produce text or graphics on the display; and
an input/output controller operatively coupled to the processor, the
25 input/output controller being configured to control interactions with one or more input/output devices that can be operatively coupled to the computer system.

30 44. The computer system as recited in claim 43 wherein housing is configured to enclose the light source controller, the processor, the display, the display controller, the input/output controller and at least one input/output device.

45. The computer system as recited in claim 43 wherein housing is configured to enclose the light source controller, the processor, the display controller and the input/output controller.

46. The computer system as recited in claim 43 wherein housing is configured to enclose the display.

5 47. The computer system as recited in claim 43 wherein housing is configured to enclose at least one input/output device.

10 48. The computer system as recited in claim 32 wherein the computer system has a second housing for enclosing a second component of the computer system, the second housing having a second light passing wall, the computer system further comprising: a second light source disposed inside the second housing, the second light source being configured to generate light.

15 49. The computer system as recited in claim 48 wherein the light controller operatively coupled to the second light source, the light source controller being configured to control the second light source so as to illuminate at least a portion of the second light passing wall of the housing with the light generated by the second light source.

20 50. The computer system as recited in claim 48 wherein the first housing is configured to enclose a light source controller, a processor, a display controller, an input/output device controller, and wherein the second housing is configured to enclose a display.

25 51. The computer system as recited in claim 32 wherein the housing further includes one or more opaque walls that cooperate with the one or more light passing walls to define the shape of the housing.

30 52. A general purpose computer having the ability to alter its ornamental appearance, the general purpose computer comprising:
a housing;
a computer component disposed inside the housing;

a light arrangement disposed inside the housing, the light arrangement being configured to illuminate a substantial portion of the housing so as to alter the ornamental appearance of the housing.

5 53. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 52 wherein the computer component is a CPU.

54. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 52 wherein the computer component is a display.

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55. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 52 wherein the computer component is an I/O device.

56. A general purpose computer, comprising:

15 a housing including one or more walls that define the outer peripheral form of the general purpose computer, one of the walls having an illuminable portion configured to allow the passage of light therein;

20 a light emitting device enclosed by the housing, the light emitting device being configured to generate light so as to illuminate at least a portion of the light passing wall thus altering the ornamental appearance of the general purpose computer; and

25 a processor enclosed by the housing, the processor being configured to at least partially control the operations of the general purpose computer.

57. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 56 wherein the processor is coupled to the light emitting device and further configured to control the light emitting device so as to produce a light effect.

58. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 56 further including a 30 second processor enclosed by the structural housing, the second processor being configured to control the light emitting device so as to produce a light effect.

59. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 56 wherein the illuminable portion constitutes a substantial portion of the entire housing.

60. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 59 wherein the illuminable portion constitutes the entire housing.

5 61. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 59 wherein the illuminable portion constitutes one or more walls of the housing.

62. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 59 wherein the illuminable portion constitutes a part of two or more walls of the housing.

10 63. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 59 wherein the illuminable portion constitutes a part of a wall of the housing.

15 64. The general purpose computer as recited in claim 56 wherein the area of the illuminable portion is substantially larger than any of buttons, connectors or indicators located on the housing.

20 65. A display for use with a general purpose computer, comprising a housing including one or more wall that define the outer peripheral form of the general purpose computer, one of the light walls being a light passing wall configured to allow the passage of light therein; a light arrangement enclosed by the housing, the light arrangement being configured to generate light so as to illuminate the light passing wall thus altering the ornamental appearance of the display; and

25 a display screen partially enclosed by the housing, the display screen being configured to display text or graphics via a graphical user interface.

66. A computing device comprising an enclosure having an illuminable wall in optical communication with a light source disposed inside the enclosure, said 30 illuminable wall and said light source working together to emit a characteristic glow at a peripheral portion of said enclosure.

67. The computing device as recited in claim 66 wherein the enclosure defines the outer peripheral form of the computing device.

68. The computing device as recited in claim 66 wherein the illuminable wall is formed from a translucent or semi-translucent material

5 69. The computing device as recited in claim 66 wherein the illuminable wall includes a light directing element configured to scatter light from the light source, the scattered light helping to form the characteristic glow.

10 70. The computing device as recited in claim 69 wherein the light directing element is an additive disposed inside the illuminable wall.

71. The computing device as recited in claim 69 wherein the light directing element is a coating applied to the illuminable wall.

15 72. The computing device as recited in claim 69 wherein the light directing element is a textured surface of the illuminable wall.

73. The computing device as recited in claim 66 wherein the characteristic glow is formed at an outer surface of the illuminable wall.

20 74. The computing device as recited in claim 66 the characteristic glow is formed at an outer edge of the illuminable wall.

75. An electronic device, comprising

25 a housing configured to define the outer peripheral form of the electronic device;

a distinct first component disposed inside the housing and capable of inputting or outputting information associated with the operation of the electronic device; and

30 a distinct second component disposed inside the housing and capable of outputting light so as to illuminate a substantial portion of the housing in order to effect the ornamental appearance of the electronic device.